

Remarks

Claims 1-5, 7-14, and 27-39 are pending. Claims 1, 5, and 11 have been amended. Claims 6 and 15-26 have been cancelled.

Appreciation is expressed for the indication of allowability of claims 6, 8, and 9. In response, claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 6, and to therefore put it in condition for allowance. New claim 27 has been added and includes the limitations of original claims 1 and 8 to therefore put it in condition for allowance.

Claims 5 and 11 have been amended to address the Examiner's objections.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102/103

Claims 1-5, 7, 13-20, 22, and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by French, U.S. Patent No. 5,796,498. Claims 15 and 20-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 01/45943 (Geola). Claims 1-3 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horikoshi et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,281,994 (Horikoshi), in view of French.

While the applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's arguments regarding these claims, in the interest of advancing prosecution of the present application the applicants have amended claim 1 to put it in condition for allowance and have cancelled claims 15-26. The applicants intend to pursue the previously presented claims, as well as additional claims, in a continuation application, and this amendment should not be considered as prejudicing such a continuation.

Accordingly, the applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 and 27 are allowable over French, Geola, and Horikoshi, taken alone or in combination. Claims 2-5 and 7-14 depend from claim 1 and are allowable for at least this reason. Claims 28-39 depend from claim 27 and are allowable for at least this reason.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA, 22313-1450, on Aug 3, 2004.



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8/3/04

Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,



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